

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Address: Building to the rear of 128 Caversham Road, Reading

Application No: 191799/FUL

Proposal: Retention of rendering and new windows and doors on south-east elevation and provision of entrance walkways with railings, all to two residential flats given prior approval by 170839 (part retrospective) (amended description)

Applicant: Letch Properties Ltd

Date received (valid from): 26/11/19

Target Decision date: 21/01/2020

Case officer: Jonathan Markwell

1. Site Description and Surrounding Area

- i. The application site comprises a single storey building to the rear of no. 128 Caversham Road. It is a backland site adjacent to the rear of terraced properties fronting Thames Avenue and Brigham Road. The building is in the process of being converted to residential use, having previously been offices (see relevant history below). There is also parking within the backland area (outside of the red line of the application site, but within the blue line of the site as submitted), accessed via Thames Avenue and Brigham Road.
- ii. The application site is located within flood zone 3. The site is also within an air quality management area and a smoke control zone. The immediate surrounding area is predominantly residential in nature, along with hotel / commercial units fronting onto Caversham Road. The application site is not listed, nor within a conservation area.

2. The Proposal

- i. Planning permission is sought for:
 - new windows and doors on the south-east elevation
 - the rendering of the south-east elevation
 - the installation of entrance walkways with railings

All to two residential flats given prior approval by 170839.

The applicant confirmed at the outset of the application that the works proposed had already been carried out and therefore are sought retrospectively. At the time of the officer site visit on 12/12/19 it was evident that the works were in-fact only part retrospective. Although the rendering/windows/door works have taken place, the entrance walkways had not. Accordingly, this, and also points of detail, were updated with the submission of a revised plan and change to the description of development. The nature/extent of changes were such that re-consultation was not considered to be necessary.

3. Consultation

- i. Neighbour Consultation - Consultation letters were sent to adjoining occupiers on 27/11/19, expiring on 18/12/19. No responses have been received.

4. Plans & Documents Considered

- i. The local planning authority has taken into consideration the following plan:

305-04-40 Rev P3 Elevation Alterations to Rear Units, as received 07/01/20

5. Relevant Planning History

Application site only

162096/OPA- Change of use of ground floor offices to the rear of 128 Caversham Road from Class B1(a) (Offices) to C3 (dwelling houses) to comprise of one dwelling. Prior Notification under Class O, Part 3 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015. Prior Approval Refused 30/12/16.

170839 - Change of use of ground floor only from Class B1(a) (offices) to C3 (dwelling houses) to comprise 2 one bedroom flats. Prior Approval Granted 18/07/17.

181001 - Erection of a pitched roof first floor level with two dormer additions on the south-east roofslope and eight rooflights on the north-west roofslope to create an additional bedroom and accommodation within two existing residential units, and associated works. Withdrawn 21/9/18.

Wider site

180383/NMA - Non-material amendments to planning permission 171063/FUL (Change of use of first and second floors from one flat to two x one bedroom flats and associated works) to make internal layout changes and external changes to front garden bin and boundary treatment. Agreed 12/4/18.

171960 - Application for approval of details reserved by condition 3 (Materials) of planning permission 171063. Discharged 11/4/18.

171063 - Change of use (first and second floors) from one flat to two x one bedroom flats and construction of brick wall and bin enclosure at the front of the site. Granted 27/10/17.

170725/FUL - Alterations to ground floor elevation to include new bay window and front door and alterations to ground floor rear elevation. Granted 25/08/17

170816/RPA Change of use of Ground Floor from Class A1 (shops) to C3 (dwellinghouses) to comprise 1X 2-bed flat and 2X 1-bed flats. Prior Notification under Class M, Part 3 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (as amended). Prior Approval granted 18/07/17.

161932/CLE - Residential use on first and second floor, with separate ground floor access to Caversham Road. Certificate issued 23/12/16.

161865/RPA Change of use of ground floor from Class A1 (shops) to C3 (dwellinghouses) to comprise 2 self-contained flats. Prior Notification under Class M, Part 3 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 (as amended). Permitted 23/11/16.

151700 - Certificate of Lawfulness for existing split of building to residential use of upper floors in 1999 with council tax being paid on residential area. Application Returned

141926 - Change of use of shop and ancillary offices to three two-bedroomed flats, including alterations to two elevations. Application Returned

04-01112-FUL - Change of use of garages at rear of 128 Caversham Road to office and extension to link to no: 128. Permitted 7/12/2004.

6. Equality Act 2010:

In determining this application the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. However, there is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular planning application. Therefore in terms of the key equalities protected characteristics it is considered there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

7. Relevant Planning Guidance

- i. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Development Plan for Reading relevant to the application site comprises the Reading Local Plan 2019.

The '*National Planning Policy framework*' ('NPPF') 2019 states clearly that its content is to be a material consideration in the determination of applications. The 'NPPF' states that due weight should be given to the adopted policies of the Local Development Framework (LDF) (Core Strategy and Sites and Detailed Policies Document) according to their degree of consistency with the 'NPPF' (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the 'NPPF', the greater the weight that may be given). Accordingly, the 'NPPF' and the following development plan policies and supplementary planning guidance are relevant:

8. Relevant Policies

- i. The application has been assessed against the following policies:

National

National Planning Policy Framework 2018;
National Planning Policy Guidance;

RBC Local Plan 2019

CC7 Design and the Public Realm
CC8 Safeguarding amenity
CR2 Design in Central Reading
EN15 Air quality
EN18 Flooding and Drainage

9. Appraisal

- i. The main issues are considered to be:

- Design
- Amenity
- Flooding
- Other matters

- ii. Design

The works are essentially fenestration alterations and entrance works to facilitate an office to residential prior approval given in 2017 (see relevant history above). As per the officer site visit on 12/12/19, some of the proposed works have already been carried out and hence part of this application is sought retrospectively. The works which have already taken place (rendering of

the elevation and provision of windows/doors) are considered suitable in design terms, aligning with Policies CC7 and CR2. It is acknowledged that the stepped entrance works would mean that step-free access would not be provided, which is a shortfall of the proposals. However, within the context of the constrained area / flood zone implications, on this specific occasion a stepped entrance is considered to be adequate on this occasion. Accordingly, there are no design related issues raised with the proposals.

iii. Amenity

In terms of the neighbouring/nearby occupiers, it is acknowledged that in comparison with the pre-existing context (office use and four single windows) the provision of three double windows and a single window, together with two doors and the residential use, marks a contrasting relationship with the rear of nearby Caversham Road and Brigham Road properties. However, the ground floor location of the windows, together with the angle of orientation (all at some degree of an angle to nearby properties) and the distances/boundary treatments/vegetation cover around the site means that no significantly harmful adverse amenity impacts would occur. Accordingly, the proposals are also considered to comply with Policy CC8.

With regard to the amenity of future occupiers, the provision of additional windows and dedicated access naturally improves the situation granted by the prior approval (which can only consider change of use matters). Although the units would be single aspect, the site constraints are such that this is inevitable and the proposals provide as high a standard of outlook / access to day/sunlight as is possible in this context.

iv. Flooding

As indicated above, the application site is located within flood zone 3. The application was submitted without flood based information, as this was evidenced as being satisfactory at the time of the prior approval at the site. The proposed works do not extend the buildings in any way, with fenestration and small externally located entrances instead proposed. Hence, given the history and nature of the proposals, no flooding based information is considered to reasonably be required in this instance

v. Other matters

The proposed entrances are of a limited size/footprint and therefore will not conflict with existing parking arrangements in the backland location. No transport based implications are envisaged by these specific proposals.

As there is no increase in floorspace proposed, the proposals are not CIL liable.

10. Conclusion

- i. Having regard to the material considerations and all matters raised, the Local Planning Authority considers that the balance of considerations therefore weigh in favour of granting planning permission subject to conditions.

Recommendation - Grant Planning Permission subject to conditions

Conditions - TL1 (as not all works are sought retrospectively); AP1; M3

Informatives - IF1; 1F5; 1F6; 1F7